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WTS 186A.01: Beginning Creative Writing - Introduction to Poetry

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The purpose of poetry is to remind us how difficult it is to remain just one person...
Czesław Miłosz

Autumn 2006

COM 186A “INTRODUCTION TO POETRY”

Rob Schlegel
Contact: Robert.Schlegel@mso.umt.edu

Texts

Excerpts from: Drake, Barbara. *Writing Poetry*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994.

Excerpts from: Forrest Gander. *Science & Steepleflower*. New Directions Paperbacks.

We will also be implementing various handouts that will be dispersed as the semester continues, (e.g. essays on poetry, copies of poems from a variety of contemporary American poets, etc.)

The Course

An introductory creative writing course implementing our collective experience as students of language and the world in order to expand our modes of aesthetic and poetic understanding. In short, the course will hopefully give you a solid foundation from which to discuss, critique and compose poetry.

We will critique your poems weekly in a constructive workshop to be held in this room or an alternative location.

Grading

At the end of the semester, I am required to write the letter “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” or “F” on a standardized form behind each of your names. The form is processed through a computer and printed onto your official transcript. The letter I write **will not** be a representation of your capabilities as a writer or thinker. Instead, the letter on the form will represent *the effort you put forth to enhance your own experience in this workshop*.

This means:

Wanting to be here;

Participating in discussion of work-shopped poems;

Not taking anything for-granted, especially;

the magnificent opportunity of sharing your creative-work with a group of curious, attentive, intelligent, funny, serious, caring and critical writers—

all of whom are adrift in the same sea of language and thought, ecstasy and emotion and agony and wonder that you too, perhaps have found yourself in.

Requirements

One 'finished' poem per assignment—

thus bringing your total of “finished” poems to **10**, all of which are to be collected in a “portfolio” as the semester proceeds and turned in during finals week with a one-page letter, addressed to me, describing your development as a poet from August 28th to Dec. 11th.

Please email if you have any questions or concerns.

(Poetry is)...the attempt of the imagination to inhabit nature and by that act preserve itself for as long as it possibly can against 'the pressure of reality'. And by 'nature' I mean any wilderness, inner or outer. The moment of writing is not an escape, however, it is only an instance, through the imagination, upon human ecstasy, and a reminder that such ecstasy remains as much of a birthright in this world as misery remains a condition of it.

-Larry Lewis